

WISCONSIN ASSEMBLY DEMOCRATS

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Assembly Democrats Renew Call for Immediate Action on Creating Jobs, Rebuilding Middle Class

Wisconsin economy continues to lag one year after so-called “Right to Work”

MADISON – Today Assembly Democratic legislators renewed their call for immediate legislative action on creating jobs and bringing back Wisconsin’s middle class. With Wisconsin still lagging behind in several important economic indicators one year after Governor Walker signed the so-called “Right to Work” bill into law, it is critical that the legislature take immediate action to help create jobs for Wisconsin families, increase wages and grow our state economy.

New figures released today by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics show Wisconsin now ranks 40th in private-sector job growth over the past four years – dead last among the 10 Midwest states. In 2015, more than 10,000 Wisconsin workers received layoff notices – the highest single-year number since Governor Walker took office – and Wisconsin’s middle class is shrinking faster than any other state.

“Today is a floor period on our calendar, and instead of giving Republicans more time to try to boost their campaign chances in their home communities, we ought to be getting to work to grow our economy and help middle-class Wisconsinites who are in crisis,” Assembly Democratic Leader Peter Barca (D-Kenosha) said. “Unfortunately, the Republican agenda has been extremely harmful to working people and businesses in Wisconsin. We know Republicans will not restore worker rights so at least we should work together to grow our economy and strengthen and rebuild our middle class.”

This session Democrats introduced a series of measures to help boost economic growth and wages, including a “Bring Back the Middle Class” package. That package includes much-needed student loan debt relief, more retirement security, earned sick days for workers to care for themselves and their loved ones and more affordable childcare opportunities for Wisconsin families.

“We need to get back to basics and focus on the core priorities of the people of Wisconsin by boosting retirement security and earned sick days, providing common-sense student debt relief and making affordable childcare available,” Assistant Democratic Leader Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) said. “With our economy and middle class lagging, it is more important than ever that we bring back Wisconsin’s middle class. We once again call on our Republican colleagues to put their own political interests aside and work with Democrats to do the right thing for hardworking families in our state.”

One year ago, Gov. Walker signed the so-called “Right to Work” measure into law and, as predicted by Democratic leaders opposing that law, Wisconsin’s economy has continued to lag. Today Assembly Democratic leaders called on Republican legislators to use the sense of urgency that they used in ramming through “Right to Work” to instead grow Wisconsin’s economy and rebuild the middle class.

“So-called ‘Right to Work’ – which was passed into law in a matter of weeks in an extraordinary session – showed us that when Republicans want to get something done quickly they will stop at nothing,” said Rep. Andy Jorgensen (D-Milton), Assembly Democratic Caucus Chair. “Unfortunately, Republicans have only used that zeal to lower wages and harm the middle class. We implore them to join us in putting that same urgency to work in growing our economy and rebuilding Wisconsin’s middle class.”

There has been no shortage of proposals from Democrats to grow Wisconsin’s economy. More than a year ago, Assembly Democrats put forward “15 Bills for 2015,” an Economic Opportunity Agenda designed to help create good-paying jobs, connect workers with available jobs and increase wages. The bills Democrats put forward would invest in small businesses and help grow well-paying jobs, increase the state minimum wage, expand rural broadband access, fully restore the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income working families and emphasize keeping jobs here rather than shipping them overseas.

“With the recent reports about poverty in Wisconsin at a 30-year high, we must work together to restore economic opportunity here in our state,” said Rep. JoCasta Zamarripa (D-Milwaukee), Assembly Democratic Caucus Vice Chair. “Our Democratic agenda would ensure better opportunities for Wisconsin families and workers and make us more competitive in a global economy. It is not too late to work with us to pass these bills and get Wisconsin back on the right track.”

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